United States Department of State U.S. Embassy Singapore Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):

U.S.-ASEAN Conference on Legal Issues of Regional Importance

This is the initial announcement of this funding opportunity.

Application Deadline: [January 6, 2017]

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

U.S. Embassy Singapore announces an open competition for organizations interested in submitting proposals to organize a conference that examines current *legal* issues of interest to the United States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and its partners. Proposals should encourage think tanks and academia to engage in a comprehensive conversation examining and analyzing international jurisprudence and its relation to legal issues in and surrounding ASEAN.

This conference will be part of a series of thematic U.S.-ASEAN conferences for think tank specialists, strategic thinkers, and academics. Conference presenters and participants should be encouraged to discuss the current legal architecture, examine any challenges or areas of debate, and make recommendations for policy makers in ASEAN and the wider multi-lateral architecture in the Asia-Pacific region.

Organizations (see C. Eligibility Information) are invited to submit a proposal that describes how each of the following activities will be administered:

- Partner with an organization in the host country to design and implement a 2-day conference to be held in Singapore, in April-2017. Flight schedules may require additional time both before and after the conference to accommodate travel.
- The conference should organize six to eight separate panels, each of which should cover a specific legal topic relating to ASEAN. Suggested topics include, but are not limited, to:
 - o Maritime Security and the Law of the Sea (e.g. freedom of navigation)
 - o Migration (e.g. refugees, immigration policies)
 - o Trafficking (e.g. trafficking in persons, drug trafficking, wildlife trafficking)
 - Trade (e.g. trade agreements, tariffs, export controls, rights, obligations, and adjudication under the World Trade Organization)
 - O Cyber Security (e.g. mitigation of cyber risk)
- All conference attendees will be expected to contribute and present at the conference. Attendees should represent legal experts in their subject matter and be drawn primarily from ASEAN member countries (Burma, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and the United States. Each ASEAN

county must have at least one participant, for a total of at least 11 experts. Up to four expect attendees would be invited from partner countries, such as Japan, China, Australia and India. Government officials would participate primarily as keynote speakers. U.S. government officials' participation is not covered by this grant. Officials from other governments may be covered, as needed.

- Members of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) should be invited to encourage inclusion of the next generation's perspectives. More information about YSEALI is available at www.yseali.state.gov.
- Proposals are encouraged to include a welcome event, opening plenary, and/or other opening event suitable for senior government official participation.
- The proposal should include a rubric for determining presenters and participants that is consistent with the goal of encouraging think tanks and academia to analyze and begin a dialogue concerning legal issues relevant to ASEAN, the U.S. and other partner countries. Please include presenters' biographies and/or résumés.
- Presenters and participants should be encouraged and have opportunities to network with each other to develop collaborative relationships that will persist after the conference's conclusion.
- The proposal should include management of travel and lodging logistics for all participants, speakers, and conference staff, as well as the conference venue. Estimated number of conference participants and speakers is 45. Proposals must include cost of venue, transportation, visas, travel insurance and lodging.
- The proposal must include a plan for widely publicizing the recommendations resulting from the conference, both within the United States and ASEAN via regular and social media. We encourage consideration of inviting journalists to cover the event.
- The proposal should include a description of the applicant's experience with U.S.-ASEAN relations, legal issues in ASEAN, and conference organization; as well as experience in and/or ties with organizations in Southeast Asian countries, or international expertise.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

U.S. Embassy Singapore anticipates having approximately \$250,000 in Fiscal Year 2017 Public Diplomacy funding available to support one successful application submitted in response to this NOFO, subject to the availability of funding.

U.S. Embassy Singapore may issue one or more awards resulting from this NOFO to the applicant(s) whose application(s) conforming to this NOFO are the most responsive to the objectives set forth in this NOFO. The U.S. government may (a) reject any or all

applications, (b) accept other than the lowest cost application, (c) accept more than one application, (d) accept alternate applications, and (e) waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

The U.S. government may make award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. government reserves the right (though it is not under obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

Applications should request no more than \$250,000. Applicants should include an anticipated start date on or about February 1, 2017 and the period of performance should be between 6 to 12 months.

U.S. Embassy Singapore anticipates awarding a cooperative agreement, and expects to be substantially involved during the implementation of the cooperative agreement. Examples of substantial involvement can include:

- 1) Approval of the Recipient's work plans, including: planned activities, travel plans, planned expenditures, event planning, and changes to any activity to be carried out under the cooperative agreement;
- 2) Approval of sub-award Recipients, concurrence on the substantive provisions of the sub-awards, and coordination with other cooperating agencies;
- 3) Other approvals that will be included in the award agreement.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

U.S. Embassy Singapore welcomes applications from U.S.-based and foreign non-profit organizations / nongovernment organizations (NGO); and U.S. and foreign private, public, or state institutions of higher education. For-profit are not eligible to apply.

C.2 Cost Sharing

Providing cost sharing is not a requirement for this NOFO.

C.3 Other

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the System for Award Management (SAM)(www.sam.gov) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR,1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR,1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally no entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM can participate in any activities under

an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Address to Request Application Package

Applicants can find application forms, kits, or other materials needed to apply on www.grants.gov and on the US Embassy of Singapore website under the announcement title "U.S.-ASEAN Conference on Legal Issues of Regional Importance" funding opportunity number 17-SIN-NOFO-1. Please contact the point of contact listed in section G if requesting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or for security reasons. Please note: reasonable accommodations do not include deadline extensions.

D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

For all application documents, please ensure:

- 1) All documents are in English and all costs are in U.S. dollars. If an original document within the application is in another language, an English translation must be provided (please note: the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires that English is the official language of all award documents. If any documents are provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version);
- 2) All pages are numbered, including budgets and attachments;
- 3) All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper; and,
- 4) All documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Captions and footnotes may be 10 point Times New Roman font. Font sizes in charts and tables, including the budget, can be reformatted to fit within 1 page width.

Complete applications must include the following:

- 1. Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B, as directed on Grants.gov; completed and signed SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" (if applicable) (which can be found with the solicitation on GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov); and your organization's most recent audit (single program audit, if applicable, or standard audit).
- 2. Table of Contents (not to exceed one [1] page in Microsoft Word) that includes a page numbered contents page, including any attachments.
- 3. Executive Summary (not to exceed two [2] pages in Microsoft Word) that includes:
 - a) The target country/countries and thematic area;
 - b) Name and contact information for the project's main point of contact;
 - c) The total amount of funding requested and project length;

- d) A statement of work or synopsis of the project, including a concise breakdown of the project's objectives, activities, and expected results; and,
- e) A brief statement on how the project is innovative and will have a demonstrated impact.
- 4. Proposal Narrative (not to exceed ten [10] pages in Microsoft Word). Please note the ten page limit does not include the Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Attachments, Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative, or Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). Applicants are encouraged to submit multiple documents in a single Microsoft Word or Adobe file, (i.e., Table of Contents, Executive Summary, and Proposal Narrative in one file).
- 5. Detailed Line-Item Budget (in Microsoft Excel) that includes three [3] columns including the request to U.S. Embassy Singapore, any cost sharing contribution, and total budget (see below for more information on budget format). A summary budget should also be included using the OMB approved budget categories (see SF-424A as a sample). Costs must be in U.S. dollars. Detailed line-item budgets for sub-awardees should be included in additional tabs within the excel workbook.
- 6. Budget Narrative (in Microsoft Word) that includes substantive explanations and justifications for each line item in the detailed budget spreadsheet, as well as the source and a description of all cost-share offered. For ease of review, U.S. Embassy Singapore recommends applicants order the budget narrative as presented in the detailed budget. Personnel costs should include a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of key staff, base salary, and percentage of time devoted to the project. The budget narrative should provide additional information that might not be readily apparent in the detailed-line item budget, not simply repeat what is represented numerically in the budget, i.e. salaries are for salaries or travel is for travel.

7. Attachments:

- a) Information about the team of people who would execute the work, with descriptions of the experiences and skills of each and his/her role in the bidder's organization and in the team
- b) Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- c) Timeline of the overall proposal. Components should include activities, evaluation efforts, and project closeout.
- d) Additional optional attachments: Attachments may include further timeline information, letters of support, memorandums of understanding/agreement, etc. Letters of support and MOUs must be specific to the projects implementation (e.g. from proposed partners or sub-award recipients) and will not count towards the page limit.
- 8. If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a .pdf file. This document will not be reviewed by the panelists, but rather used by project and grant staff if the submission is recommended for

funding and therefore does not count against the submission page limitations. If your proposal involves sub-awards to organizations charging indirect costs, please submit the applicable NICRA also as a .pdf file. If your organization does not have a NICRA per 2 CFR 200. 414(f) the organization can elect to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68. The budget narrative should indicate what costs will be covered using the 10% de minimis rate.

Please note: U.S. Embassy Singapore retains the right to ask for additional documents not included in this NOFO. Additionally, to ensure all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the U.S. State Department Review Panel will review the first page of the requested section up to the page limit and no further.

Additional information that successful applicants must submit after notification of intent to make a Federal award, but prior to issuance of a Federal award, may include:

- 1) Written responses and any revised application documents addressing any conditions or recommendations from the Review Panel;
- 2) Other requested information or documents included in the notification of intent to make a Federal award or subsequent communications prior to issuance of a Federal award.

D.3 Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants must have an active registration in SAM (<u>www.sam.gov</u>) prior to submitting an application, must prove a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, formerly referred to as a DUNS number, and must continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by the U.S. government.

The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. SAM is the Federal government's primary database for complying with FFATA reporting requirements. OMB designated SAM as the central repository to facilitate applicant and recipient use of a single public website that consolidates data on all federal financial assistance. Under the law, it is mandatory to obtain a UEI number and register in SAM.

SAM requires all entities to renew their registration once a year in order to maintain an active registration status in SAM. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure it has an active registration in SAM and to also maintain its active registration in SAM.

No entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM is eligible for any assistance or can participate in any activities in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR Part 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR Part 1989 Comp., p. 235).

U.S. Embassy Singapore may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully

complied with the requirements by the time U.S. Embassy Singapore is ready to make an award, U.S. Embassy Singapore may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

An exemption from this requirement may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

- 1. An applicant is a foreign organization located outside of the U.S., does not currently have a UEI, and the Department determines that acquiring one is impractical given the geographic location; or
- 2. If the applicant's identity must be protected due to possible endangerment of their mission, their organization's status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.

D.4 Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than 11:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST), on January 6, 2017 by email to singaporeusembassy@state.gov under the announcement title "U.S.-ASEAN Conference on Legal Issues of Regional Interest" funding opportunity number 17-SIN-NOFO-1.

Submission via email will automatically log the date and time an application submission is made, and the Department of State will use this information to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered unless the U.S. Embassy Singapore point of contact listed in section G is contacted prior to the deadline and is provided with evidence of system errors outside of the applicants' control and is the sole reason for a late submission. Applicants should not expect a notification upon U.S. Embassy Singapore receiving their application.

If ultimately provided with a notification of intent to make a Federal award, applicants typically have two to three weeks to provide additional information and documents requested in the notification of intent. The deadlines may vary in each notification of intent and applicants must adhere to the stated deadline in the notification of intent.

D.5 Funding Restrictions

U.S. Embassy Singapore will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization. No entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM is eligible for any assistance.

Federal awards generally will not allow reimbursement of pre-Federal award costs; however, the grants officer may approve pre awards cost on a case by case basis. Generally, construction costs are not allowed under U.S. Embassy Singapore awards.

D.6 Other

All application submissions must be emailed to singaporeusembassy@state.gov.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that an application has been received in its entirety. U.S. Embassy Singapore bears no responsibility for applications not received before the due date or for data errors resulting from transmission.

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents will not be accepted. Reasonable accommodations may, in appropriate circumstances, be provided to applicants with disabilities or for security reasons. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in the applicable solicitation and these instructions.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Criteria

Evaluators will judge each application individually against the following criteria, listed below in order of importance, and not against competing applications.

Quality of Project Idea

Applications should be responsive to the NOFO, appropriate in the regional context, and should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the stated mission.

Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives

A strong application will include a clear articulation of how the proposed project activities contribute to the overall project objectives, and each activity will be clearly developed and detailed. A comprehensive monthly work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and the logistical capacity of the organization. Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable results-focused and achievable in a reasonable time frame. Applications should address how the project will engage relevant stakeholders and should identify local partners as appropriate. If local partners have been identified, U.S. Embassy Singapore strongly encourages applicants to submit letters of support from proposed in-country partners. Additionally, applicants should describe the division of labor among the direct applicant and any local partners. If applicable, applications should identify target areas for activities, target participant groups or selection criteria for participants, and the specific roles of sub-awardees, among other pertinent details. In particularly challenging operating environments, applications should include contingency plans for overcoming potential difficulties in executing the original work plan and address any operational or programmatic security concerns and how they will be addressed.

Institution's Record and Capacity

U.S. Embassy Singapore will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Applications should demonstrate an institutional record of responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past grants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's objectives.

Cost Effectiveness

U.S. Embassy Singapore strongly encourages applicants to clearly demonstrate project cost-effectiveness in their application, including examples of leveraging institutional and other resources. However, cost-sharing, or other examples of leveraging other resources are not required and do not need to be included in the budget. Inclusion in the budget does not result in additional points awarded during the review process. Budgets however should have low and/or reasonable overhead and administration costs and applicants should provide clear explanations and justifications for these costs in relation to the work involved. All budget items should be clearly explained and justified to demonstrate its necessity, appropriateness, and its link to the project objectives.

Please note: If cost-share is included in the budget then the recipient must maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost-share, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. In the event the recipient does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the recipient's budget, U.S. Embassy Singapore's contribution may be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution.

Multiplier Effect/Sustainability

Applications should clearly delineate how elements of the project will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. A good multiplier effect will have an impact beyond the direct beneficiaries of the grant. A strong sustainability plan may include demonstrating continuing impact beyond the life of a project.

Program Content Development and Meeting Coordination

Working closely with U.S. Embassy Singapore and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs Office of Public Diplomacy the Recipient shall develop a robust program for the conference, schedule the event for a mutually agreed upon location in Singapore, issue invitations, develop the agenda and content for each of the panels, and recruit panelists and participants. The event will generally draw 40 - 50 attendees.

Conference and Travel Arrangements

The Recipient will arrange for and use grant funding as needed, for conference space for approximately 40-50 attendees, as well as audio-visual equipment, signage, participant materials, marketing, registration, coffee breaks and lunch. The Recipient shall use grant funding to make reservations and purchase airline tickets and hotel rooms for experts from the region, if appropriate. Additional experts may be invited to participate in the conference. Since grant funding may not be sufficient to cover the travel of all experts, the invited experts could be self-funded, or funded through other donors or cost share. The Recipient will purchase the tickets at reasonable and cost-effective prices in accordance with Fly America Act regulations. The Recipient shall provide the tickets and/or other travel documents (travel itineraries and meeting schedules) to the traveler no later than five days prior to the start of travel. The Recipient will make arrangements and use grant funding to cover ground transportation on an as-needed basis.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Complete applications will include a detailed plan (both a narrative and table) of how the project's progress and impact will be monitored and evaluated throughout the project. Incorporating a well-designed monitoring and evaluation component into a project is one of the most efficient methods of documenting the progress and results (intended and unintended) of a project. Applications should demonstrate the capacity to provide objectives with measurable outputs and outcomes and engage in robust monitoring and assessment of project activities. The quality of the M&E plan will be judged on the narrative explaining how both monitoring and evaluation will be carried out, who will be responsible for those related activities. The M&E plan will also be rated on the M&E performance indicator table. The output and outcome-based performance indicators should not only be separated by project objectives but also should match the objectives, outcomes, and outputs detailed in the logic model. Performance indicators should be clearly defined (i.e., explained how the indicators will be measured and reported) either within the table or with a separate Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS). For each performance indicator, the table should also include baselines and yearly and cumulative targets, data collection tools, data sources, types of data disaggregation, and frequency of monitoring and evaluation; There should also be metrics to capture how project activities target the most at risk and vulnerable populations or addresses their concerns, where applicable.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

U.S. Embassy Singapore will provide a separate notification to applicants on the result of their applications. Successful applicants will receive a letter electronically via email requesting that the applicant respond to panel conditions and recommendations. This notification is not an authorization to begin activities and does not constitute formal approval or a funding commitment.

Final approval is contingent on the applicant successfully responding to the panel's conditions and recommendations, being registered in required systems, and completing and providing any additional documentation requested by U.S. Embassy Singapore. Final approval is also contingent on final review and approval by the U.S. Embassy Singapore's warranted grants officer.

The notice of Federal award signed by the U.S. Embassy Singapore's warranted grants officers is the sole authorizing document. If awarded, the notice of Federal award will be provided to the applicant's designated Authorizing Official via email to be counter-signed.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in 2 CFR Chapter 200 (Sub-Chapters A through F) shall apply to all non-Federal entities, except for assistance awards to Individuals and Foreign Public Entities (for more information on these exceptions, see Chapters 5, Federal Assistance to Individuals, and 6,

Federal Assistance to Foreign Public Entities Directive.) Sub-Chapters A through E shall apply to all foreign organizations, and Sub-Chapters A through D shall apply to all U.S. and foreign for-profit entities.

The applicant/recipient of the award and any sub-recipient under the award must comply with all applicable terms and conditions, in addition to the assurance and certifications made part of the Notice of Award. The Department's Standard Terms and Conditions can be viewed at https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/Documents/2015DeptTermsAndConditionsForUSandForeign Org.pdf.

F.3 Reporting

Applicants should be aware that U.S. Embassy Singapore awards will require regular financial and progress reporting. The Federal Financial Report (FFR or SF-425) is the required form for the financial reports. The progress reports must include page one (signed and completed) of the SF-PPR (Performance and Progress Report) and a narrative attachment to the SF-PPR as described below; and the SF-PPR-B: Project Indicators (or other mutually agreed upon format approved by the grants officer) for the indicators.

Narrative progress reports should reflect the focus on measuring the project's impact on the overarching objectives and should be compiled according to the objectives, outcomes, and outputs as outlined in the award's Scope of Work (SOW) and in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Statement. An assessment of the overall project's impact should be included in each progress report. Where relevant, progress reports should include the following sections:

- Relevant contextual information (limited);
- Explanation and evaluation of significant activities of the reporting period and how the activities reflect progress toward achieving objectives, including meeting benchmarks/targets as set in the M&E plan. In addition, attach the M&E plan, comparing the target and actual numbers for the indicators;
- Any tangible impact or success stories from the project, when possible;
- Copy of mid-term and/or final evaluation report(s) conducted by an external evaluator; if applicable;
- Relevant supporting documentation or products related to the project activities (such as articles, meeting lists and agendas, participant surveys, photos, manuals, etc.) as separate attachments;
- Description of how the Recipient is pursuing sustainability, including looking for sources of follow-on funding;
- Any problems/challenges in implementing the project and a corrective action plan with an updated timeline of activities;
- Reasons why established goals were not met;
- Data for the required indicator(s) for the reporting period as well as aggregate data by fiscal year using the SF-PPR-B: Project Indicators or other mutually agreed upon format approved by the Grants Officer. Additional pertinent information, including analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, if applicable.

A final narrative and financial report must also be submitted within 90 days after the expiration of the award.

Please note: delays in reporting may result in delays of payment approvals and failure to provide required reports may jeopardize the recipients' ability to receive future U.S. government funds.

U.S. Embassy Singapore reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial project information during the award period.

G. CONTACT INFORMATION

For technical submission questions related to this solicitation, please contact Nikolina Kulidzan at kulidzan@state.gov .

For a list of federal holidays visit:

 $\frac{http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/federal-holidays/\#url=2015}{}$

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Applicants should be aware that U.S. Embassy Singapore understands that some information contained in applications may be considered sensitive or proprietary and will make appropriate efforts to protect such information. However, applicants are advised that U.S. Embassy Singapore cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed, including pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other similar statutes.

The information in this NOFO is binding and may not be modified by any U.S. Embassy Singapore representative. Explanatory information provided by U.S. Embassy Singapore that contradicts this language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO and negotiation of applications does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. U.S. Embassy Singapore reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the project evaluation requirements.

This NOFO will appear on www.grants.gov and U.S. Embassy Singapore's website.